MR. BLACK'S SECRET

by CATHRINE BARR

BELLFOUNTAIN SCHOOL
DIST. NO 23 - BENTON CO.

MR. BLACK'S SECRET

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HENRY Z. WALCK, INC. NEW YORK
1965

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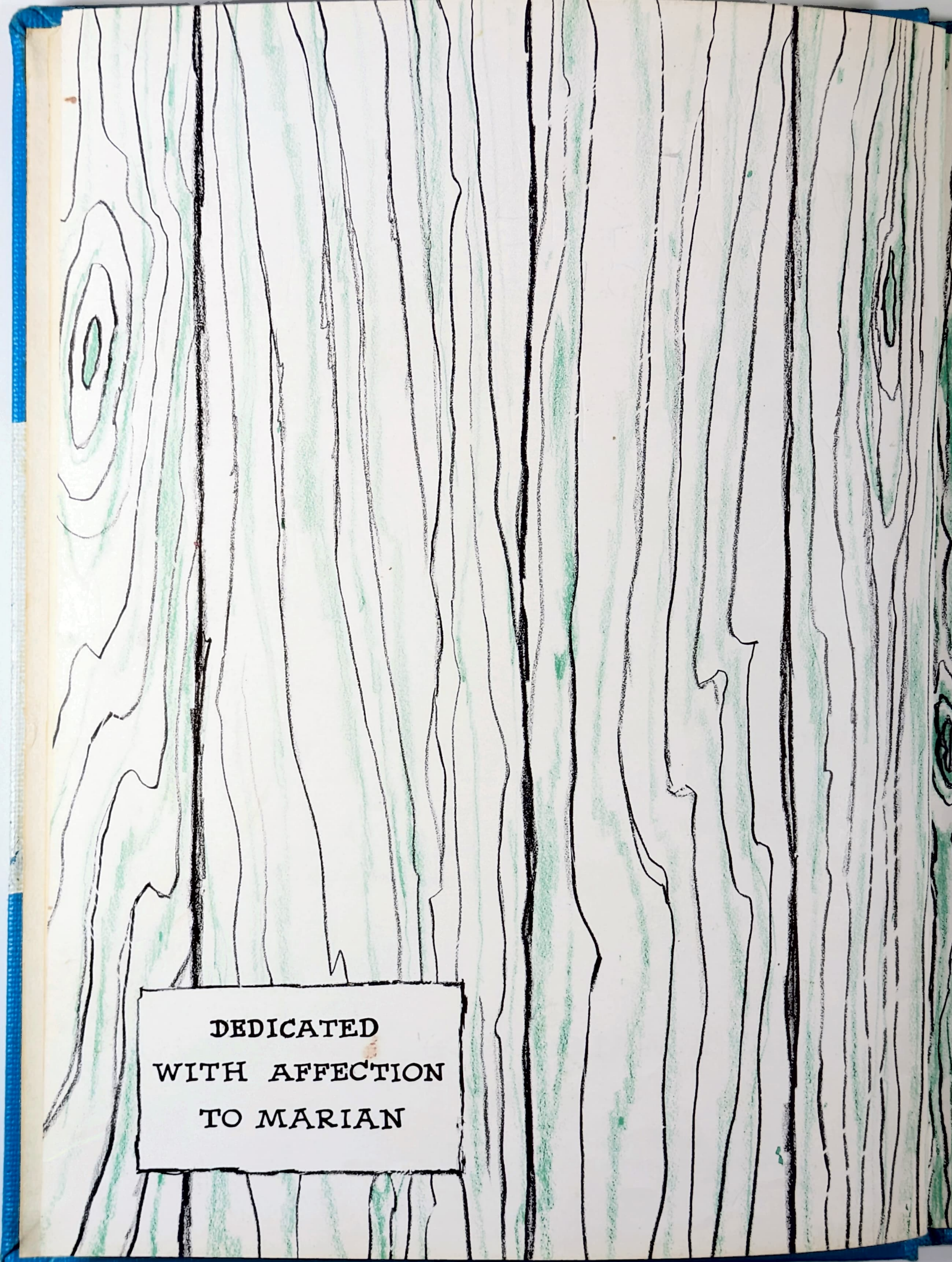

DEDICATED
WITH AFFECTION
TO MARIAN

Mr. Black, the cat,
peered around the corner.

On the porch a stranger
was eating the food put there
for Mr. Black by his family.

Mr. Black snarled ! His back arched. Fur bristled ! Tail twitched !

But surprise ! After a friendly look, the stranger went on eating.

He was handsome, too, with shining stripes on his black coat.

Curious, Mr. Black circled around, came closer.

The friendly stranger made room for him and went on eating.

So, Mr. Black moved
cautiously in and
ate with him.

Thus Mr. Black and
Skunk became friends.

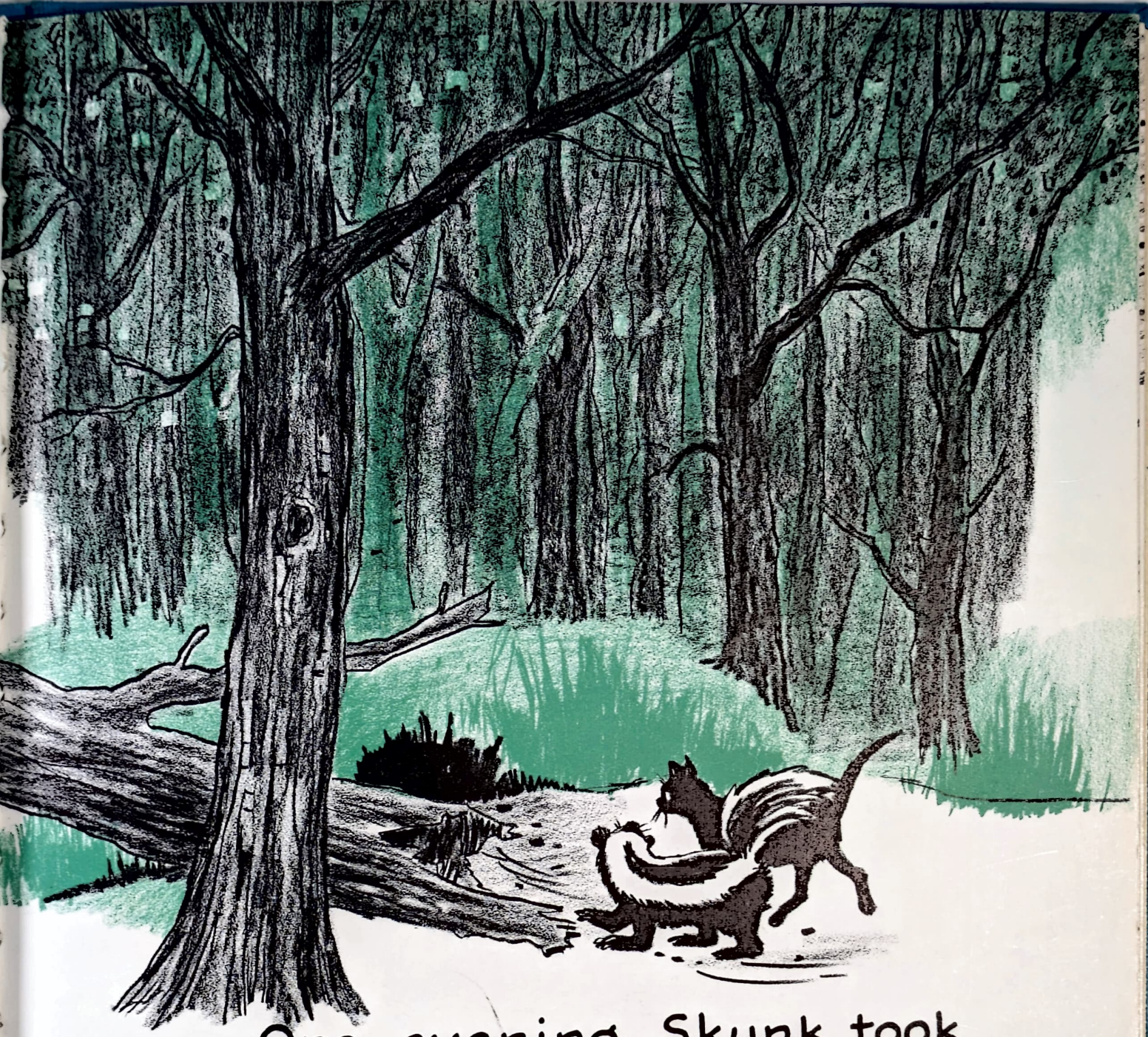
After that
Skunk came
quite often
to have supper
with Mr. Black.

Skunk usually rushed at the food. Sometimes his paw tipped the dish, spilling the supper. This annoyed Mr. Black who was very neat.

But Skunk was so friendly. . . . Mr. Black overlooked his messiness.

After supper they played together in the shadows until Skunk left for the woods.

Sometimes Skunk gobbled the food so fast that Mr. Black hardly got any. But Mr. Black overlooked this rudeness.



One evening Skunk took Mr. Black to see his den in the woods. They became better friends than ever.

So Skunk came every evening to have supper with Mr. Black.

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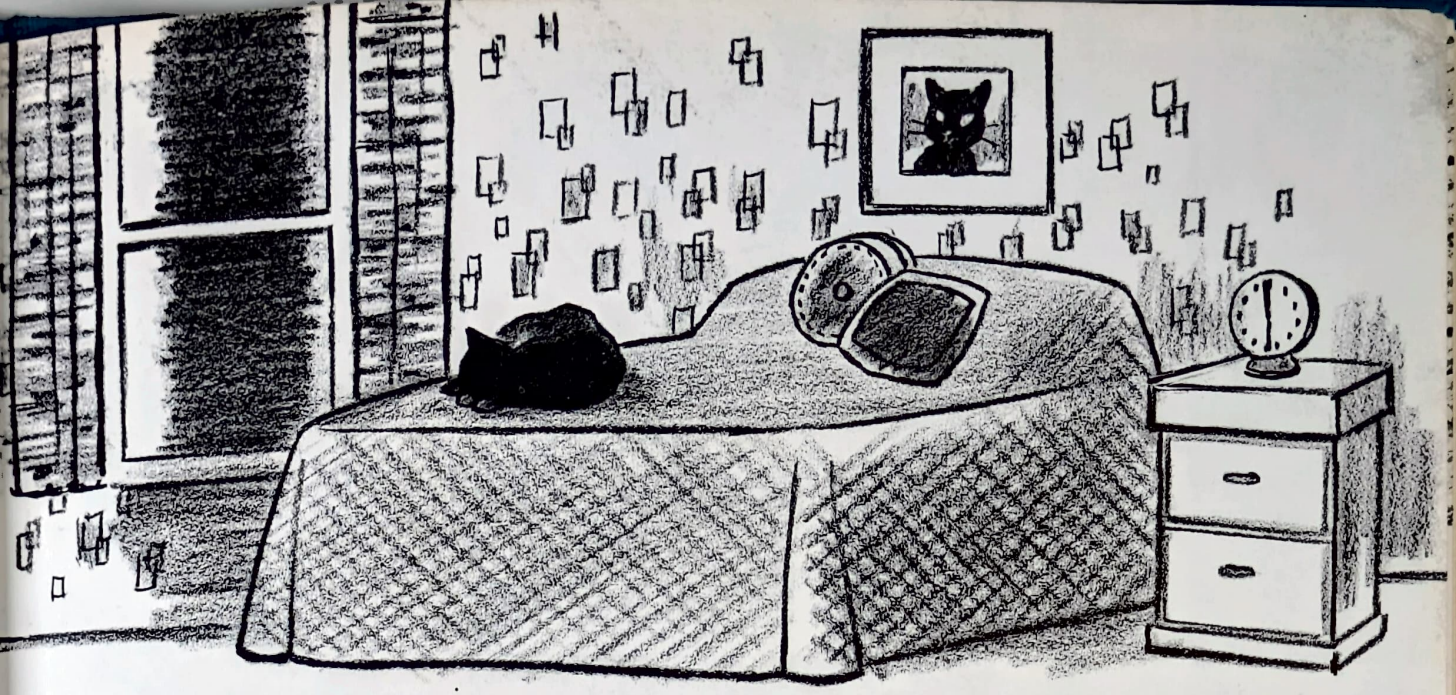
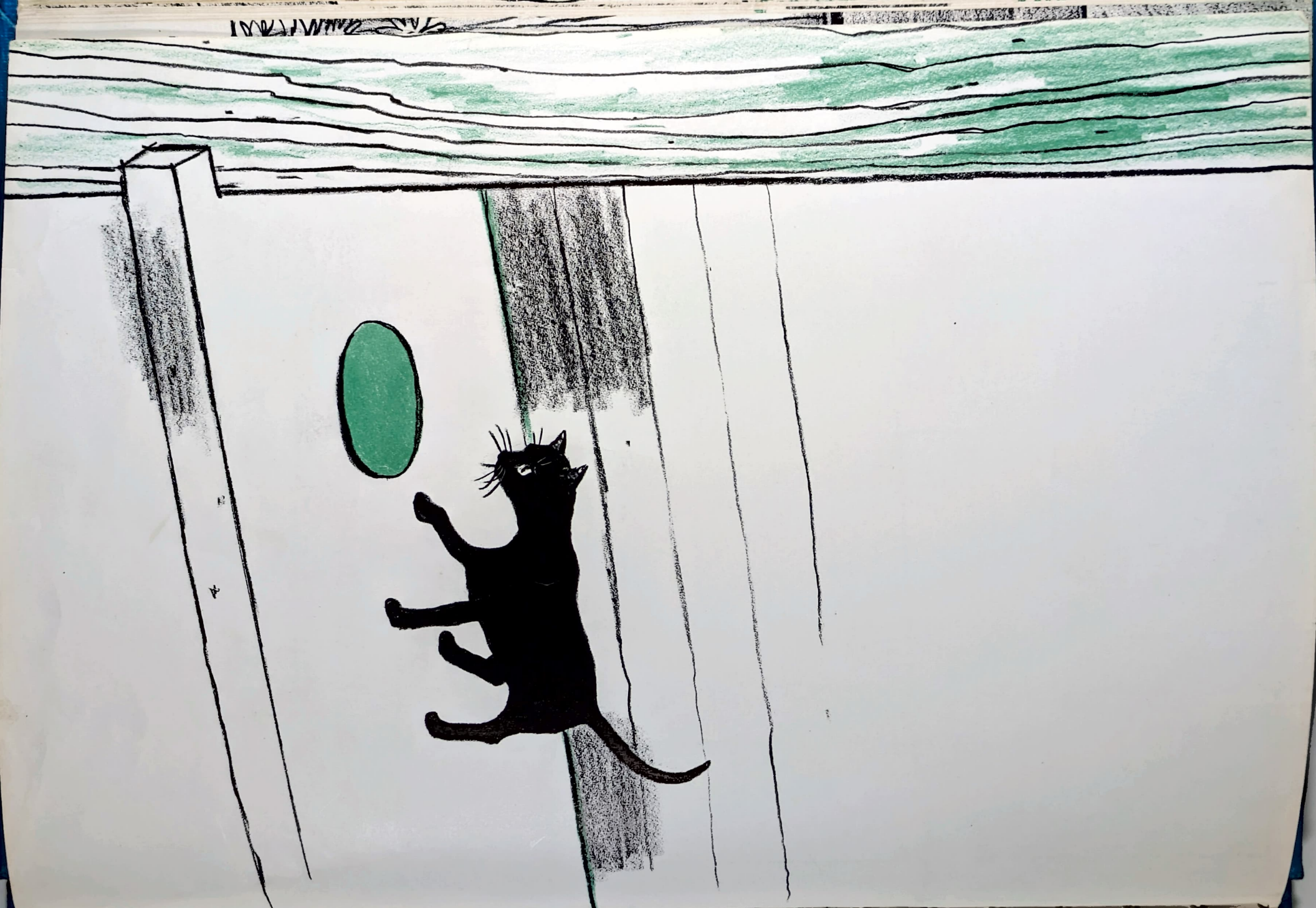


Then one night the family put Mr. Black's food out early, while he was still snoozing upstairs.

While Mr. Black slept, Skunk came and ate the whole meal.



Later, when the family opened the door for Mr. Black, they saw the dish was empty.

"Who ate Mr. Black's food?" they asked.

Mr. Black knew, but he just looked away.

So the next night the family watched secretly from the window.

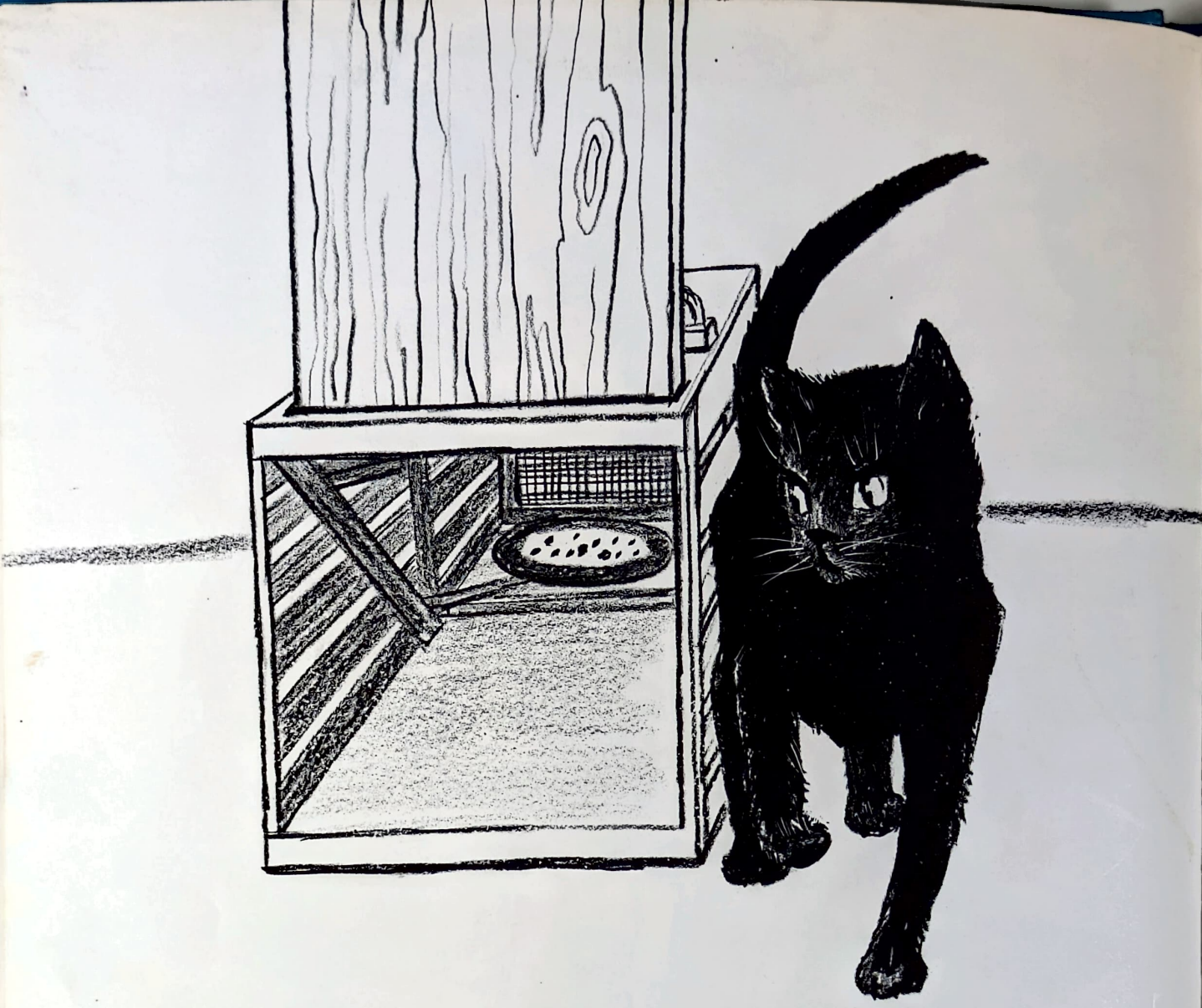
Skunk came and
ate with Mr. Black.

The family was amazed to
see a skunk eating on the
porch with their pet.

At the window they made not a move. They didn't want to startle the skunk.

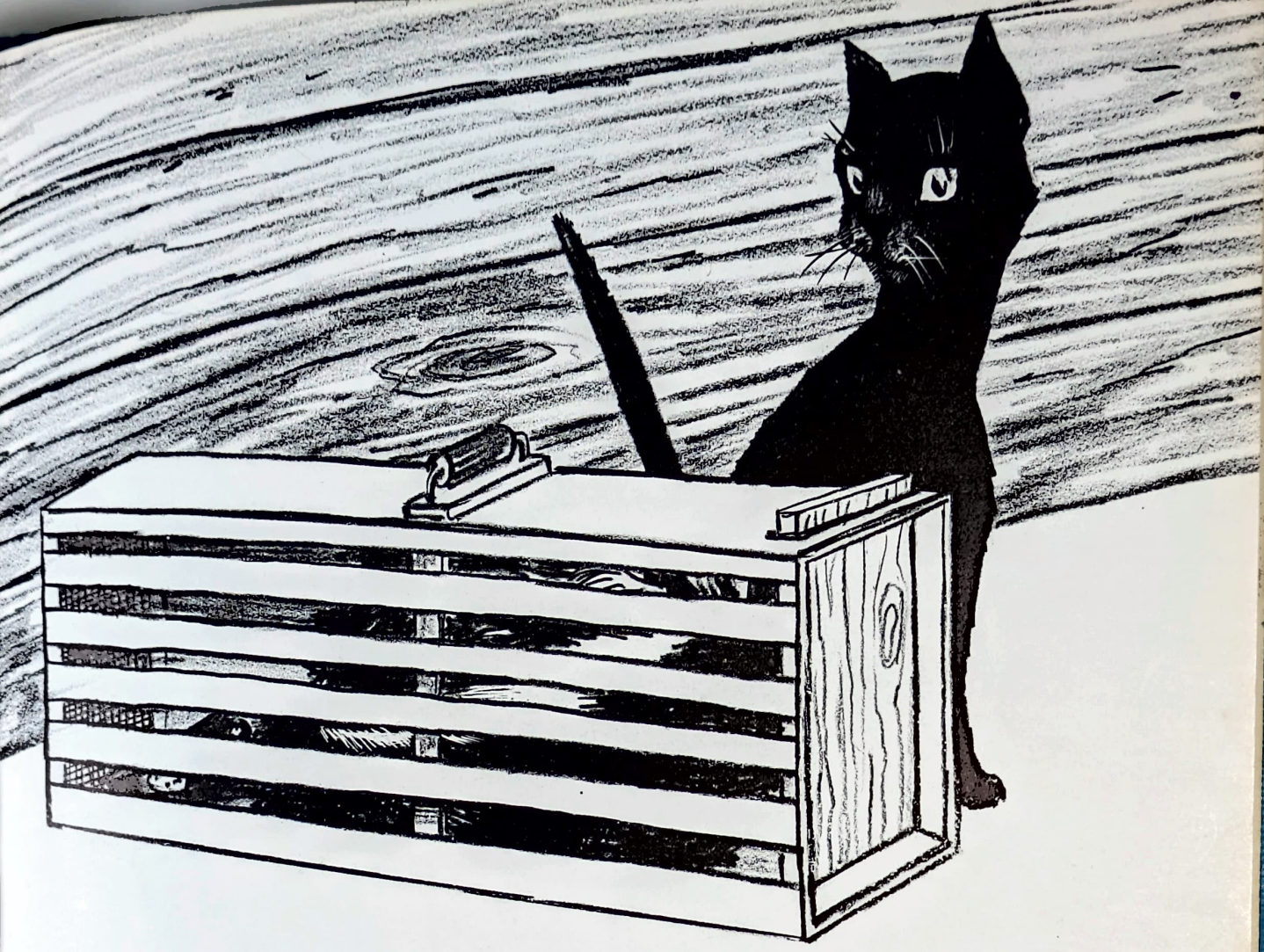
After Skunk had gone, they really fussed! They were alarmed! A skunk eating on their porch! He might spray his perfume on everything!

"We'll fix him!" father said. "We need a trap small enough, so he won't be able to spray."



The following night the family put out a box trap, with a dish of food inside for bait.

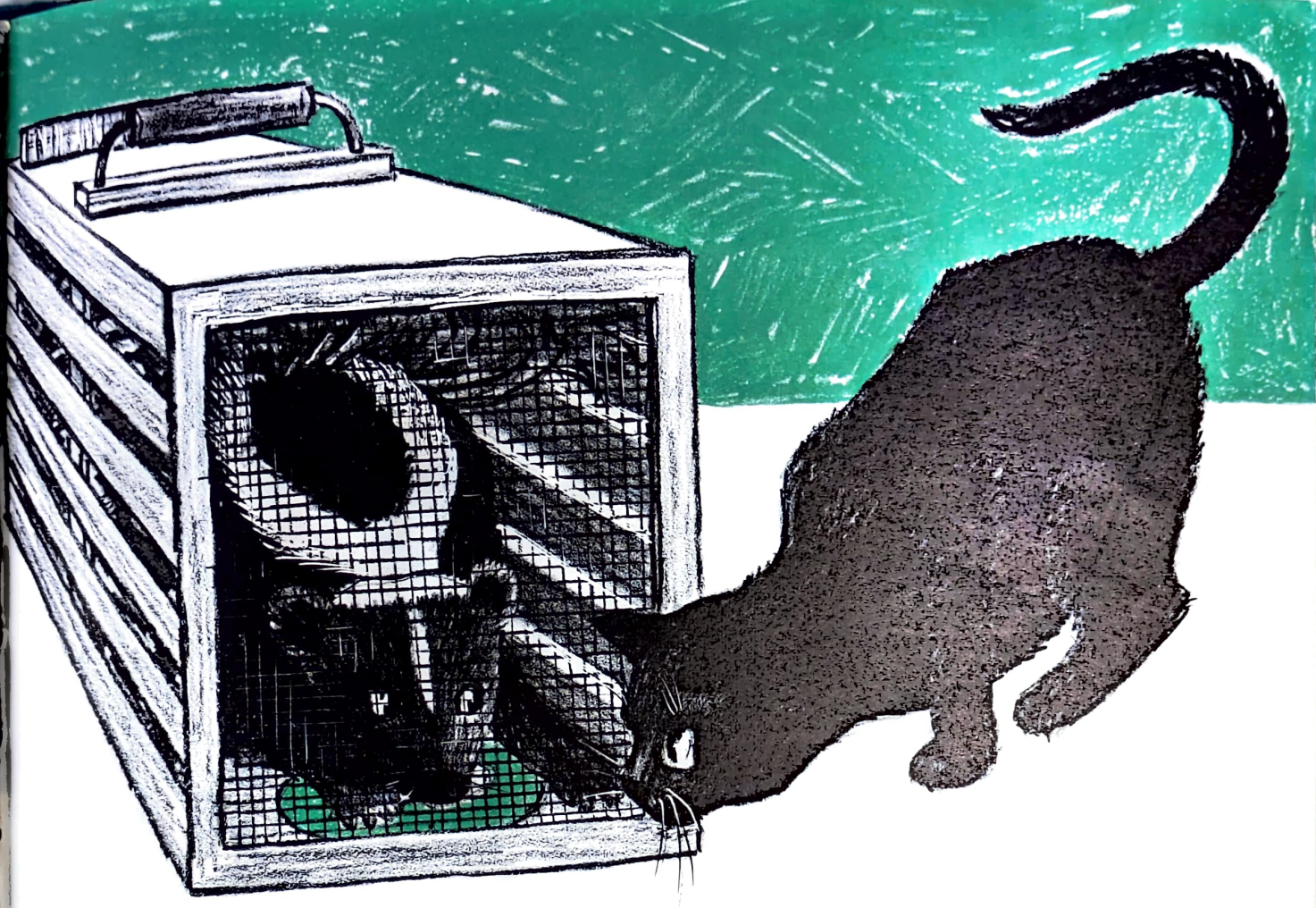
Mr. Black tried to warn his friend, but the hungry skunk dashed right into the trap after the food.



BANG went the
door behind him!

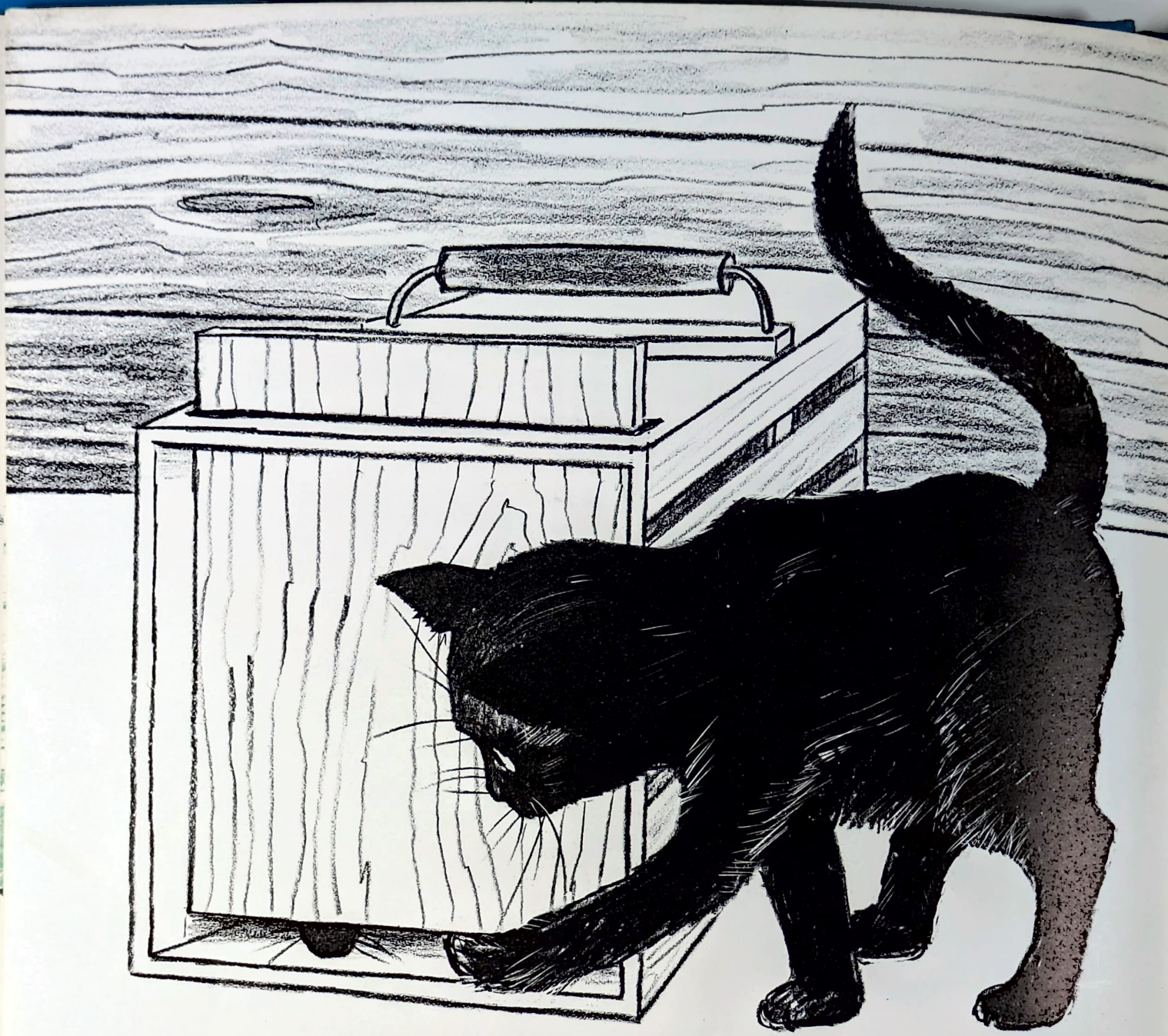
Skunk was a
prisoner!

Mr. Black looked for the family. Luckily they were at dinner and didn't hear the commotion.

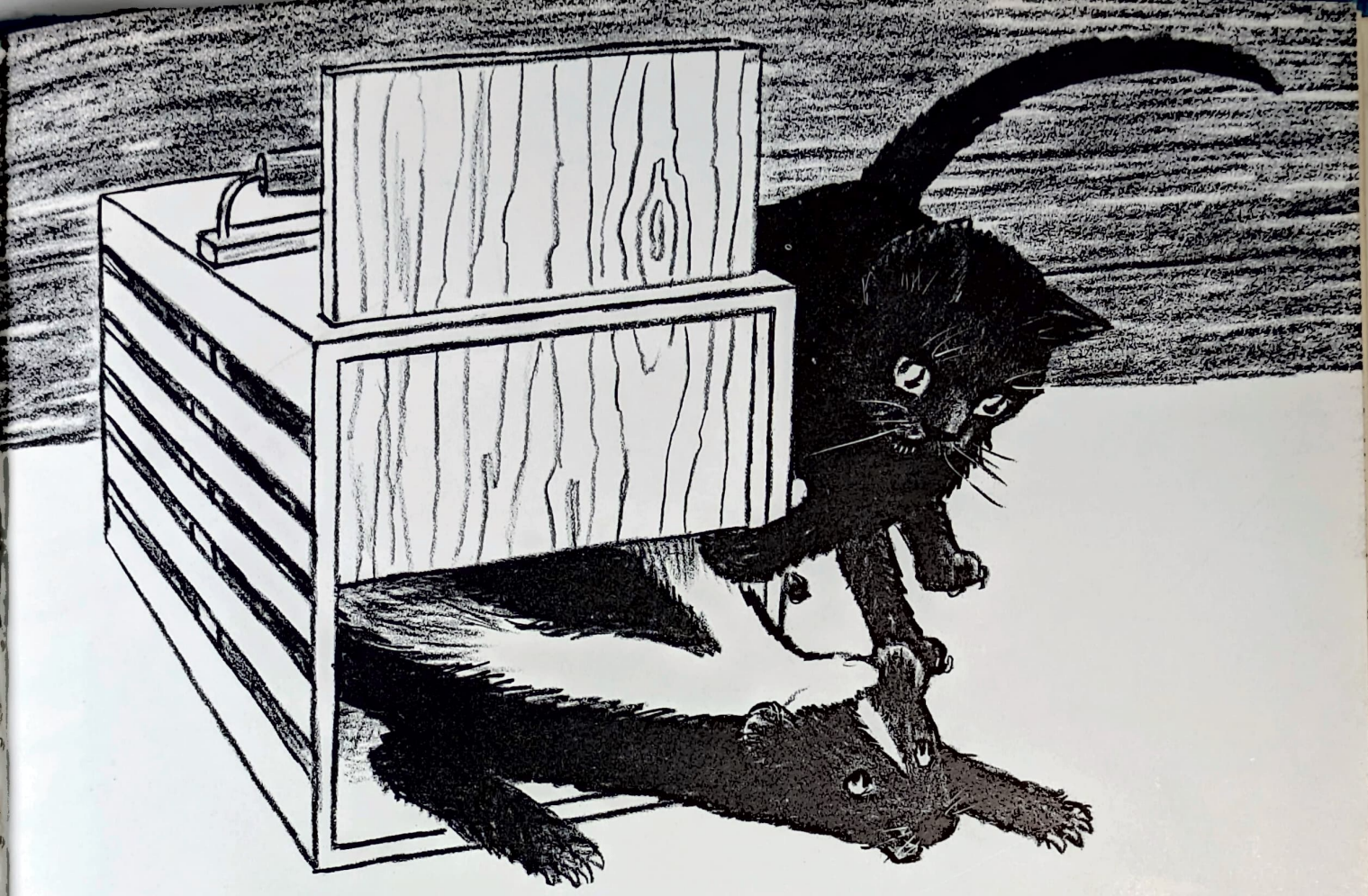


The cat prowled around the trap. He peeked in. Skunk ate, and peeked out.

Mr. Black sat. Could he help his friend? He pawed at the trap.

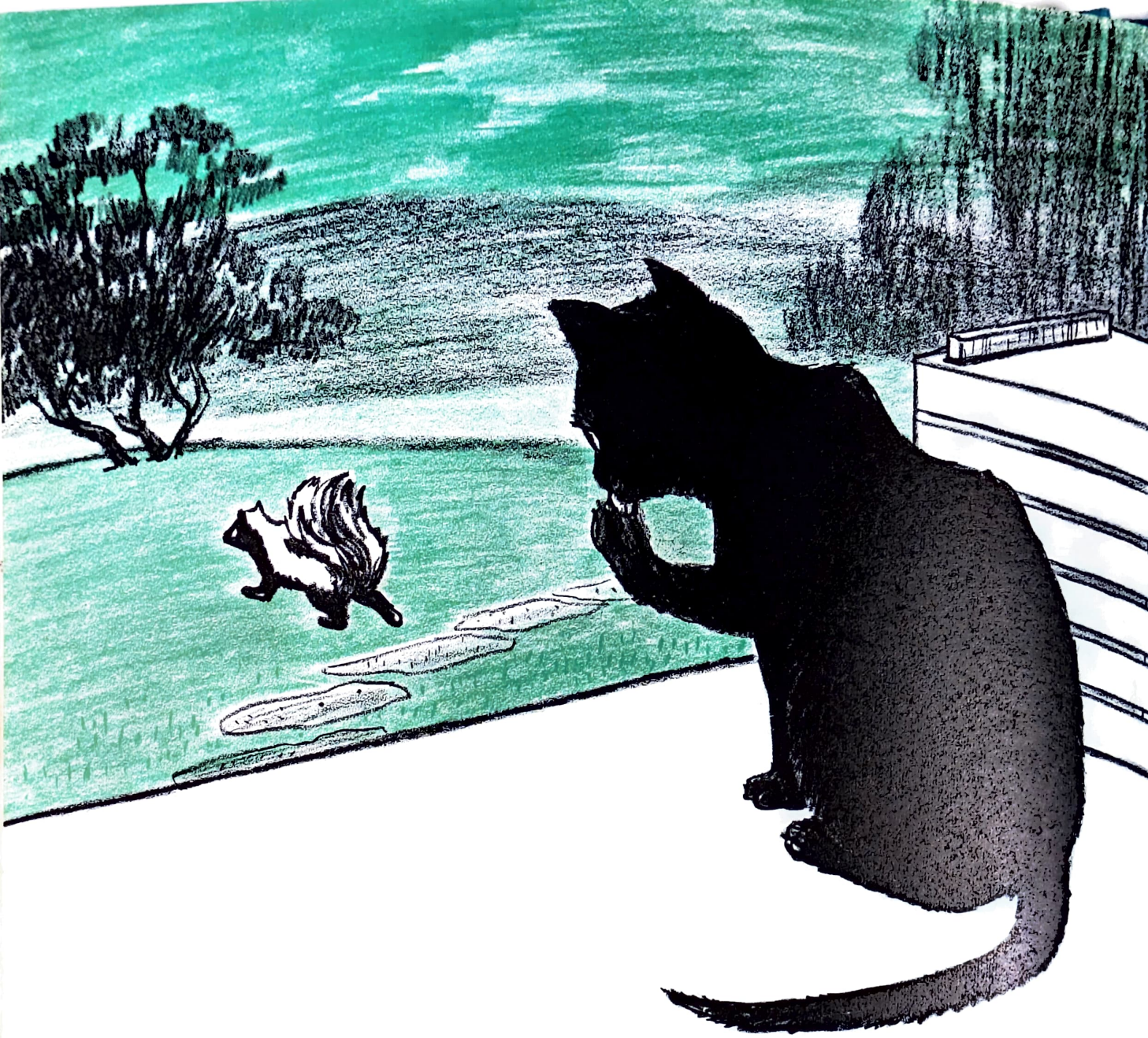


At last he got a claw under the door and lifted it just a bit. Then Skunk got his nose under it.



Finally, together, they lifted the door just enough for Skunk to wiggle out.

He looked at Mr. Black in his friendliest way, then ambled across the yard toward his den in the woods.



Mr. Black watched from the porch, licking his paws.

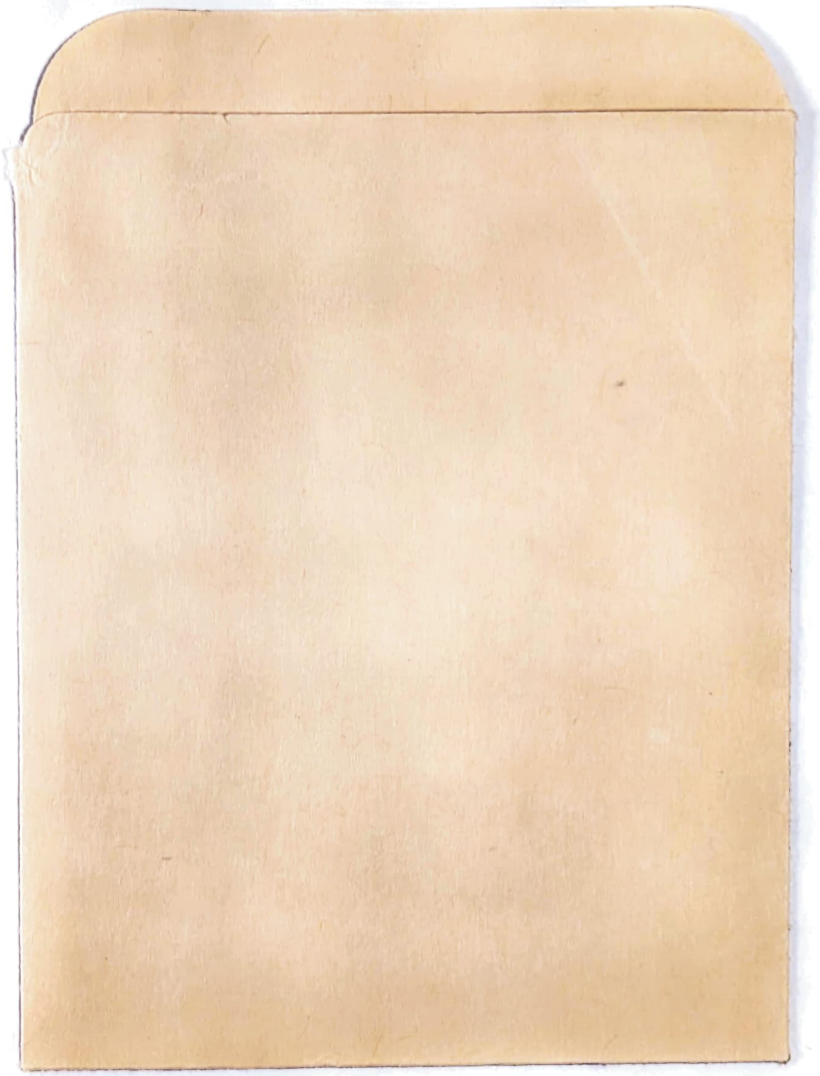
The family came out. They saw the closed trap and seized it. Nothing inside but the empty dish!

No skunk!

They looked at Mr. Black in wonderment.

"What happened?" they asked.

Mr. Black finished washing, smoothed his whiskers, and looked off over the hills.



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